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THE
KINDERGARTEN
IN A
NUTSHELL
—
SMITH

YA 06161



† Un Memoriam †

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**THE KINDERGARTEN
IN A NUTSHELL**

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LADIES' HOME JOURNAL
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THE KINDERGARTEN
IN A NUTSHELL

A Handbook for the Home

BY

NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH

AUTHOR OF "UNDER THE CACTUS FLAG" AND "THE CHILDREN OF THE FUTURE," AND JOINT AUTHOR WITH KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN OF "THE REPUBLIC OF CHILDHOOD," "CHILDREN'S RIGHTS," "THE STORY HOUR," AND "KINDERGARTEN CHIMES."

1899

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Rev. William A. Brewer

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PREFACE

Many readers are as impatient as Lord Bacon was of "prefaces, passages, and excusations," and yet a preface may sometimes be as necessary as the preliminary sip the duck takes before slipping into the water, —a procedure apparently not so much an end in itself as a preparation for what is to follow.

To begin the preface, then, the series of papers from which, with considerable addition and alteration, this little volume has been made was originally written for "The Ladies' Home Journal," in response to the requests of many of its subscribers that they might know something of the kindergarten as a means of development for children and of the possible adaptation of its principles to the home.

The requests, from men as well as women, fathers as well as mothers, naturally came for the most part from dwellers in isolated

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places, villages, and the smaller towns of this and other countries; and it is for them that this handbook is intended, rather than for people within easy reach of the advantages of a great city. The number of letters of inquiry which the articles have called forth testifies to a general interest in the subject, while the tone of some of them makes it necessary to say again that the papers were never for a moment supposed to take the place of instruction in a training school, nor to produce a finished kindergartner. No book, be it ever so bulky and comprehensive, could attempt to do that, nor could it give so adequate an idea of the child-garden as a single day spent in one of those ideal communities would impart. But there are many parents, past, present, and future, as well as many persons vicariously interested in the training of children, who lack the time, the opportunity, or the means to gain a thorough knowledge of Froebel's educational philosophy and yet are most anxious to learn as much of it as may lie within their power.

To such persons, and their name is apparently legion in America, this handbook is addressed, and not to those desirous of opening a kindergarten as a means of live-

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lihood, nor to those who aspire to learn by reading or correspondence what can never be thoroughly understood save by viva voce instruction, explanation, and practice.

If its purpose is clearly defined, its brevity will be as clearly comprehended, and also the fact that it aims to create an appetite for the subject, rather than to gratify it. If it serves as an introduction to the study of the kindergarten, if it leads some mothers to go direct to Froebel and learn from him the magic words that will turn their tasks into pleasures, if it persuades a few young women to take the kindergarten training, not alone that they may become independent, but for the sake of a fairer, fuller womanhood, it will have more than fulfilled its reason of being.

The title of the manual, "The Kindergarten in a Nutshell," may seem an arrogant one to those who believe, as indeed the author does, that a lifetime of study is not enough for the understanding of Froebel's philosophy. One would say, on first thought, that to condense such infinite riches in so little room would be a task for him who packed Pandora's box, or compressed the Arabian genie into the bottle; but, on second thought, one would see perhaps that all a

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nut need hold is the life-principle, and the mustard-seed is proof of how tiny that may be. If still you question whether this principle can persist in so confined a space, put it to the test. Plant the nut in favourable soil, and if, indeed, not one green shoot appear, then the author will confess her failure.

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Joy to the laughing troop
That from the threshold starts,
Led on by courage and immortal hope,
And with the morning in their hearts.
They to the disappointed earth shall give
The lives we meant to live,
Beautiful, free, and strong ;
The light we almost had
Shall make them glad ;
The words we waited long
Shall run in music from their voice and song.
Unto our world hope's daily oracles
From their lips shall be brought ;
And in our lives love's hourly miracles
By them be wrought.
Their merry task shall be
To make the house all fine and sweet,
Its new inhabitants to greet
The wondrous dawning century.

EDWARD ROWLAND SILL.

The Kindergarten in a Nutshell

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS THE KINDERGARTEN?

WHAT is the kindergarten? The word has made itself a home in English now; it may be considered to be thoroughly naturalized; but perhaps even yet it is not universally understood in its adopted country, for, though a good citizen, it retains a touch of foreign accent. What does the word mean in the German, and why did the great teacher, Friedrich Froebel, cry "Eureka!" when it first came to his mind as fitly descriptive of his new educational institution?

Kindergarten—child-garden: the name is simple enough and yet it is absolutely

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new, while there is a touch of genius in its simplicity and in its perfect adaptation to the system it describes.

The True Meaning of the Word

What does the word garden suggest to us? A sheltered spot, guarded from rough winds and open to the sunshine, rich, fruitful earth, carefully trained vines, blooming flowers, soft green turf, well-kept paths, abundance of air and dew and rain, and everywhere freshness and fragrance and loveliness. And what of the gardener, what are his duties? It is he who lays out the garden, who prepares the earth, who plans the wind-breaks, who sets out the plants in favourable locations according to their kind, who uproots the weeds, destroys noxious insects, prunes and trains, mows the turf, protects the tender seedlings from glare of sun, and provides water when the skies are niggardly. He does all these things, if he is wise and careful, but he knows that flower and tree and vine and grass-blade must do their own growing, and that neither dew nor rain, air nor sun-

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shine are his to give. Saint Paul understood the philosophy of the matter when he said: "So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

Just as the gardener knows that the miraculous life-principle exists in every seed he sows, and will develop under the right conditions, so Froebel believes that in every child there is the possibility of a perfect man, and that it is the task of the educator to provide the conditions which will develop that possibility.

It is that portion of Froebel's philosophy which relates to the training of children below school age that we are to discuss in this volume, and it is his insistence upon the importance of this formative period that furnishes one of his distinctive contributions to educational ideals. The kindergarten was the product of the lifelong thought, study, and experience of a profound child-observer and child-lover, a man rich in native insight and wisdom, and well versed in the knowledge of the schools. It provides for the young human plant the

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proper conditions for growth and harmonious development, suitable climate, soil, and exposure, careful nurture, happy occupation for activities of soul, mind, and body, and opportunities for the learning of those relationships which bind man to his fellow-creatures, to nature, and to God.

The Aim of Kindergarten Discipline

The aim in discipline is to make each child self-governing, and at the same time to teach him his responsibility toward, and dependence upon, the community of which he is a part. We believe that kindergarten principles, when rightly applied in the training of American children, will prove of the greatest efficiency in correcting the faults to which they seem peculiarly subject. Whether it be due to the climate, that convenient scapegoat for our national failings, or whether, a far more likely supposition, it comes from over-indulgence, undue notice, undue prominence at home, our children are often markedly nervous, high-strung, precocious, and therefore somewhat difficult to manage. They lack

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that fine flower-like serenity, that healthy physical poise, that red-cheeked, bread-and-milk, early-to-bed-and-early-to-rise vigour which mark their little English cousins, for instance ; and though we may be proud of their superior quickness and vivacity, our pride must droop a little when we see how easily these may degenerate into positive faults.

When we hear the traveller say, as we sometimes do, that American women are charming, American men fine fellows, but American children detestable, the fire flashes in our eyes for a minute, and then we look about us to see what foundation there may be for the remark. Granted that it is not and never could be said of your children and of mine, but how about our neighbours' ? Do we find in them any failings which a just, reasonable, firm, though gentle government, appropriate to their needs and to their years, might have corrected had they been subject to it from the beginning ? If so, then we may well recommend the application of discipline according to the ideals of Froebel, satisfied

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that such discipline will bring poise, calmness, self-control, self-forgetfulness, and helpfulness, and that therefore it is especially well fitted for the coming citizen of a republic. Not only is it a school of citizenship, but it is a school of patriotism also, for it trains the child from the beginning in the history of his country, so far as his undeveloped powers are able to receive it, and places before him in the national hero-stories an ideal toward which he may struggle in the future.

Women the Natural Educators of Children

Valuable as the kindergarten is to the child, it is no less valuable to the woman who studies, who broods over, who lives out its principles.

It was Froebel who said that the destiny of nations lies in the hands of women, and to them he turns as the natural and inevitable educators of the human race. No woman who has read Froebel and believed his words can feel thereafter that her sphere is small, her opportunities restricted, for he gives her a new light upon her life, and

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especially upon that "quiet, secluded sanctuary of the family which only can give back to us the welfare of mankind." It is because his philosophy contains so much of the spiritual element that those who study it deeply are, as our United States Commissioner of Education once said, "constantly growing in insight and power of achievement."

For the sake of the fulness of development which it brings to the whole nature, we would make kindergarten training a part of every woman's education ; but it is never too late to begin a good movement, and if the mothers whose school-days are long over, and even the grandmothers who read these words, have never had an opportunity to learn from Froebel, we would at once enroll them into classes, and urge them to engage in the study even if they have reached the advanced age of three-score and ten.

Study Clubs of Mothers May be Organized

In many small towns, villages, and sparsely settled neighbourhoods of the

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United States there are earnest women and true mothers eager and anxious to gain new light for the children's sake, but there is as yet no kindergarten, and therefore no kindergartner who can serve as a leader in the study of Froebel. But let not that discourage us; there is nothing we cannot get if we desire it sufficiently and are willing to wait for it, and the only thing needed here is one woman—just one—with sufficient energy, interest, and enthusiasm to gather together a few of her neighbours and tell them her desires and the reasons for them. At this meeting, which may be entirely informal, a Study Club may be organized, without officers it may be, and without constitution or by-laws—simply a company of earnest women resolved to know what the kindergarten can do for them, for their children, and for other people's children.

There are various firms in this country devoted to the publication of educational literature, any one of which could give advice as to the best books on the kindergarten, which, it should be explained, are for

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the use of a Study Club, and should not, therefore, be too technical in character.

Perhaps it would be well, however, before beginning upon books, to take up something briefer and more condensed, and for this purpose the so-called "Steiger tracts"* may be recommended. For a few cents apiece every member of the club might be supplied with a set of these leaflets, which could then be studied in common. It might, perhaps, be well to apportion them among the members, requiring each person to study a certain one carefully at home, to become sufficiently familiar with its arguments to repeat them at the meeting, and be prepared to read and explain the more important paragraphs. When these are thoroughly digested other leaflets and essays may be obtained at trifling cost from publishing firms that make a specialty of kindergarten literature.†

* E. Steiger & Co., 25 Park Place, New York.
Twenty-seven tracts for ten cents.

† Kindergarten Literature Co., Woman's Temple, Chicago, Illinois.

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The Coöperation of Both Parents Needed

Up to this time the mothers have done all the work in this neighbourhood enterprise; they have taken the initiative, as it is their duty and their right to do in any social movement, especially one concerned primarily with the nurture and training of children, but we must remember that Froebel built his hopes for the regeneration of the human race on the evolution of the ideal family, and for that family two parents are needed. We have reached the stage where the coöperation of men is necessary and desirable, and we want to open their eyes to some of the new truths we have been considering. A general meeting for the whole community would now be advisable, the most effective readers and speakers in the Study Club being selected to present the various arguments for the kindergarten as a training for children and a study for women. This would, perhaps, be none too easy a task for a person unaccustomed to public, or semi-public, speaking, but the members of such a club as we describe would, from the very circum-

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stances of the case, be neither dull, commonplace, nor light-minded. If they were any of these things, it would never have occurred to them to begin the study of the kindergarten, or, having opened the door, they would have fainted on the threshold.

Meetings to Study the Kindergarten

The best results, in the awakening of public interest, may be expected to follow these general meetings, if successful, and they should be continued at regular intervals that men and women may keep pace in interest in and study of this new and vital question. It should be seen to, however, that such gatherings do not become the dry and bloodless affairs which too often pose as educational conferences. The subject of education in itself is certainly a vitally interesting one to every thoughtful mind, both on its theoretical and its practical sides, but there is nothing about which people can so prose if they are allowed, and about which they can present such tiresome arrays of cut-and-dried statements, worn-

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out facts, and trite reflections. Let us have the programmes of our neighbourhood meetings brief and bright, then, that our masculine guests be not overwearied in spirit ere the race is fairly begun. We score one point in the beginning, perhaps, for unless enthusiasm over one's specialty clouds the judgment, there is a shade more interest in the kindergarten among people generally than in other stages of early education. There seems, at least, to be much greater warmth of feeling, both for and against the system, much more readable literature on the subject, and a larger attendance on public kindergarten conferences than can be claimed by those interested in primary school work, for instance. Whether this is caused by the fervency of spirit of the kindergartner, the arresting and compelling nature of Froebel's philosophy, or the superior attractions of the very little child we need not attempt to decide, but we may thankfully accept the fact, if indeed it be one, and rejoice in any happy circumstance which gives to men a more intimate knowledge of the younglings of the flock, with

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whom, from the nature of things, they come so little in contact.

The Kindergarten Bible Must be Studied

When the leaflets mentioned above have been thoroughly studied it is time to begin the reading and discussion of books upon the kindergarten, and full, descriptive catalogues of the most helpful among these volumes can easily be obtained from educational publishers. Whatever else is used or neglected, however, Froebel's "Mother-Play" (*Mutter-und-Kose-Lieder*), the kindergarten Bible, must first be taken up and read, studied, discussed, thought upon, and pondered over, till the truths it holds have taken root in heart and life. The book is absolutely unique in literature; it had no predecessors and has had no descendants; therefore it may well be that some things about it will at first strike the reader as vaguely metaphysical, or out of proportion, or sentimental, or overwrought—even, perhaps, as grotesque. But withhold your judgment, turn its pages with open mind and reverent spirit, and by and by, in com-

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pany with all true-hearted women who have ever read it seriously, you will acknowledge it as an interpreter of life and a key to its problems.

There are now three magazines in the United States devoted to the kindergarten, and each one of these is either conducting a course in the study of the "Mother-Play," or giving comments upon the book with original illustrative poems. Any or all of these magazines would be found most helpful, both on the theoretical and practical sides of kindergarten work, and Study Clubs might subscribe to at least two, if not all three of them, and constantly use them for private study and general discussion.

Practical Work

As the work of the Clubs progresses from the general to the particular, in the order to be suggested in this handbook, taking up in succession the various instrumentalities of education used in the kindergarten—gifts, occupations, songs, plays, and stories—it is supposed that the members will give as much time and study

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as they find possible both to the book itself, to the leaflets recommended, and to kindergarten literature in general. When the simple course of study is finished its followers will have taken only the first steps in kindergarten training, but it may be that one among them will feel that she has gained enough knowledge to make a tentative beginning in teaching the neighbourhood children.

If she can and will gather them together for two or three hours every morning, and with the help and advice of other members of the club try the practical application of some of the principles they have been studying, it is probable, if she loves and understands children, that an encouraging degree of success will attend her labours. She could do no harm, at least, with some of the Froebel occupations—sewing, weaving, and modelling in clay, for instance; she could delight her little pupils with simple talks and stories, and if she had any musical ability she could teach them some of the standard kindergarten songs and plays.

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Care in Selecting the Kindergartner

It may be, if the community is large enough, that this modest beginning, heralded by those eager missionaries, the children, will awaken so much interest that the services of a trained kindergartner can be engaged. Let much wisdom and discretion be employed in selecting this kindergartner, and let it be understood that she must be not only a graduate of a good training school, but a good woman also, one whose heart and soul have been awakened, as well as her mind instructed, in the truth as it is in Froebel.

It has been often said, so often that we weary at the sound, that character-building is and should be the essential aim of education, but it is, unfortunately, the tendency of truth to become truism. The fact that two and two make four was doubtless familiar to Noah, and imparted by the object-lesson method to Shem, Ham, and Japhet in the ark, but the knowledge is just as useful to-day, and must be taught, explained, and illustrated to people if they have not discovered it for themselves.

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We cannot insist too much upon the truth that he who has never builded character for himself can hardly be expected to build it in others, and it is for this reason that the personality of the kindergartner is so all-important a matter. It is as Stevenson said: "A spirit communicated is a perpetual possession. These best teachers climb beyond teaching to the plane of art; it is themselves and what is best in themselves that they communicate."

Coöperation in this kindergarten work need not of course be confined to the parents of the community, for any one interested in education may, by the payment of a subscription, secure the admission of a little protégé, the expenses of whose tuition could not otherwise be met. It would be easy, too, to interest the church in the work—for it can be clearly proved that there is no better missionary enterprise—and persuade it to contribute to the support of the new movement or furnish, if nothing more, a room where the children may be gathered.

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Where the Neighbourhood is Large Enough

If the neighbourhood is large enough to have a public school building, and there is an unused room therein, the authorities may perhaps be willing to lend it to the kindergarten, and here, side by side with the primary school, is really its ideal location, both because it is thus related to public education, of which it forms the initial stage, and because the older children may then easily serve as escorts and guardians to their younger brothers and sisters.

There is nothing more valuable to neighbourhood life than a kindergarten—no, not even the church itself, of whose work it should always be a part. It supplies a centre for social activity, a nucleus around which may gather some of the best and highest interests of the community. It is folly to think, if you are childless, that you have no concern in the matter, for it is one of general interest, and is the business of every public-spirited man and woman. You might as well refuse to give your support to the almshouse because none of your relatives are indigent, or deny

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the necessity of a public library because you happen to be blind.

The kindergarten is most valuable to the life of to-day because of the social training it gives. There is great danger in isolating children and in bringing them up too exclusively in the company of grown people. They need the society of their equals as much as we who are older, and they must learn by absolute contact with their fellows the interdependence of all life, and the fact that we are members one of another. Every exercise of the kindergarten is of a social nature, and the child is only separated from his playmates when he has transgressed the laws which teach that the pursuit of his own happiness and the enjoyment of his own liberty are dependent upon his allowing the same rights to his companions.

Cultivating the Child's Religious Nature

The kindergarten, too, cultivates the religious nature in a manner suitable to childhood, and the principles on which this training is based need no interpretation by

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a kindergartner, but can be understood and developed by any thoughtful, earnest woman. This religious nurture has nothing whatever to do with sects, and need not be objected to by Buddhist, Brahmin, Confucian, or Hebrew, by no one, in fact, save the atheist, for it is an awakening of the spiritual nature, a development of the powers of love, reverence and aspiration, and a turning of the soul toward God, as the flower to the sun.

Froebel also believed that the child should be led to the love and appreciation of Nature and the life of Nature by the care and protection of pet animals, the sowing of seeds, the tending of plants, and the gathering of their fruits and flowers, and this province of kindergarten work is obviously within the power of any intelligent person to conduct, and furnishes a most important part of the training of children.

All these things, so feeble in the telling, so mighty in the working, are within your reach, dear women, everywhere. You need but to stretch out your hands and they are

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yours and your children's. If for their
sakes you will give yourselves to the study
of the kindergarten the next generation
will indeed begin the history of the world
anew.

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CHAPTER II

WHAT SHALL WE PLAY WITH ?

THERE is, perhaps, no educational opinion which is more firmly fixed in the popular mind than that the earlier a child is taught to read the more it will redound to his present good, to his future glory, and to the welfare of his country; and there is certainly no other belief of its size and enduring quality which is, on the whole, more pernicious.

It is passing away, no doubt, especially among thinking people, but not so fast that it does not still form a stumbling-block in the path of the much-enduring kindergartner. We are credibly informed that many of our New England progenitors at the beginning of this century could read the Bible with comparative fluency at three years of age, but although properly astonished at the impressive fact, we cannot help feeling that we should probably

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have been able to carry on the study of the good Book a little later if our ancestors had not begun with it so early, and we question whether the brain force of the children might not have been better able to cope with the tasks of to-day if their fathers and mothers had studied things more, and words less, in the past.

Children Must Learn the Alphabet of Things

Froebel said, and many great teachers before and after him have expressed the same thought, that the A B C of things must precede the A B C of words, and give to the words their true foundations, which means, being interpreted, that we must know the alphabet of things, so that we can begin to spell out the world a little, before we are set to learn book lessons.

There is little that is valuable or life-giving in the ordinary primer and first reader of the schools; there is little that appeals to the interest of the child in vowel sounds and diacritical marks, and he can very well afford to defer the dramatic interest of tales concerning the cat, the mat, and the rat,

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the fan, the pan, and the man, until a time when he can pass over them more quickly, regarding them not as ends in themselves, but as stepping-stones to something better. The first six years of life are all too short for what is to be learned in them outside of the domain of book-knowledge, and upon the depth, the strength, the extent, and the wholesomeness of these early impressions depend the depth, the strength, the extent, and the wholesomeness of later knowledge and being.

Froebel believed that the child should be taught the full use of the members of his body and of his senses, that his faculty of speech should be trained, the powers of his mind and heart somewhat developed by the study of the things about him and their relations to himself, before he was introduced to the conventional learning of the schools—that is, to dealing with signs and symbols for things instead of the things themselves. He therefore worked out a connected series of objects which we call the gifts—legacies he bestowed upon the children of mankind, which it was his be-

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lief would, if properly used, not only give all the preliminary ideas necessary to the understanding of concrete things, but lay the foundation for abstract knowledge also. This is teaching by means of objects, you say, and is certainly nothing new. Quite true; it is as old as the Garden of Eden, but though the idea itself may be old, there are inspired novelties in the manner of its presentation.

How the Child is Taught to Use the Gifts

What clear conceptions must the child have before he can understand even so simple an object as his rubber ball: what do his experiments from the time he is able to "take notice" show that he is trying to find out?

First, such large general facts as form, colour, motion, size, material, direction, position, and, a little later perhaps, number, weight, dimension, and divisibility. He would doubtless discover all these things eventually if left to himself and given full liberty to experiment, but we claim that the objects called the kindergarten gifts

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give him the required knowledge in less time and in an orderly manner. They begin with solids, represented first by woollen balls, then wooden balls, cubes, and cylinders, and larger wooden cubes divided in various ways; next progress to surfaces, or thin tablets of wood or pasteboard of various shapes; then to lines, straight and curved, shown by sticks of different lengths and metal rings, and end in points, which may be pebbles, shells, or such seeds as beans, lentils, coffee berries, or corn. The materials of the gifts are all simple enough, you see, but the idea at the foundation is masterly; for you will perceive, if you examine the series, that it is so arranged as to give the child all the conceptions he needs for understanding the objects of the world about him. Not only this, but they are all connected one with the other; there is an orderly progression in them, which begets in the mind a habit of seeing things in their right relations and interdependent, as they are in life.

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Arguments for and against the Gifts

The gifts, as they now exist, were carefully worked out by Froebel after years of experiment, and are the result, not only of a thorough understanding of childish needs and desires, but of a deep knowledge of the sciences, notably of geometry and crystallography, in which he was particularly proficient. They do not represent a finality as they stand at present; indeed many suggestions as to their extension and improvement have already been made, though not yet universally adopted. It is claimed, for instance, and this, impartially considered, seems to be one of the strongest objections to them, that they are not large enough in their present form to give complete pleasure to the child, and that their size, or want of it, renders the work at once too petty and too much of a strain upon the nervous activities in arrangement, balance, etc. Kindergartners are now everywhere making experiments with the larger blocks, which can already be had at any kindergarten supply store, and definite conclusions will doubtless soon be

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reached as to their superiority in a physiological point of view and their supposedly greater attractions to the child.

Experiments are also being made on additions to the chain of objects as ordinarily presented, on new blocks and figures which shall supplement those in use and render the series more complete. Many of these changes Fröebel himself suggested, though he did not fully work them out, and the present agitation on these subjects marks a healthy condition in the kindergarten world, a feeling that

“ He must upward be and onward
Who would keep abreast of truth.”

The Gifts Appeal at Once to the Child

It is our province, however, in this little manual, to consider the gifts as they are at present, not as they may be, or perhaps some time will be, and one of the most interesting things about this series of objects is the way in which they are used.

They would appeal at once to any child who saw them laid out upon a table, as being most appropriate and delightful

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playthings; they would so appeal to most adults, probably, and grown-up fingers would stretch out instinctively to the bright colours, the smooth surfaces, the shining steel, the deftly divided blocks, the fascinating bits of cardboard, the shapely geometric figures. "Why, this will bounce, and that will roll, and these will build houses, and these roofs, and these pillars," cries the child; "and here are pretty colours and shapes to make kaleidoscope figures, and here rings and bright sticks to lay pictures on the table!"

This is the result of the first glance merely, of a cursory examination, for only extended study and experience can tell what these simple objects, if rightly used, can do for the whole being of the child.

If we think only of the intellectual value of these playthings, we see that by the use of the first (six worsted balls) the pupil cannot help gaining an idea of colour, form, and material, and, by the various plays connected with it, motion, direction, and position.

With the second (wooden sphere, cube,

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and cylinder), form is even more strongly accentuated because of the contrasts shown; material is noticed, number introduced, and the reasons for rest as well as motion dwelt upon.

Next come the building gifts, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth (wooden cubes of two sizes, cut in various ways), and here enter, of necessity, great varieties of form, size, dimension, relation, position, divisibility, and an extended knowledge of number, progressing as far as fractions.

The Child Soon Learns to Investigate

The chief joy of these cubes to the child is the opportunity they afford him for investigation, for the satisfaction of his healthy desire to take things apart and put them together again. He can divide the blocks to his heart's content and find out how "the wheels go round," and he can build them up again into all sorts of forms, and thus gratify his imagination and his constructive instinct. It is because we give the little one no opportunity to build up that he is so prone to destroy. He has no

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evil desire to tear things to pieces, merely for the joy of destruction; he would far rather be a maker, a doer, a creator, if opportunity were given him—witness the intense childish joy in Robinson Crusoe and his achievements, and the longing that springs in every youthful breast to share that hero's unexampled advantages. The baby of three or four years feels the same longing in the bud, as it were, and these divided blocks assist him to gratify it.

With the seventh gift the child begins to work with plane surfaces, using circular, square, and triangular tablets of wood or pasteboard, both coloured and uncoloured. There is an admirable opportunity here for gaining knowledge about plane geometry both in the forms themselves and in combination, and further experiment with colours is made possible.

Then come straight lines (sticks of the eighth gift), curved lines (metal rings of the ninth), and the points of the tenth gift, gradually eliminating one dimension after another, or approximating thereto,

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putting off the body and taking on the spirit, as it were.

Invention

During the entire time the child is using this connected series of objects he is encouraged to make something new with each one, something which shall be all his own, and this insistence upon invention is a distinctive feature of the kindergarten. He is never to be content with the examination and study of his blocks, not even to be content with following the suggestions and directions which the kindergartner gives for building, but when this is over he is to make something himself, either a copy of an object connected with his daily life or a symmetrical figure that pleases his fancy. Man is only of value, says the kindergarten (and herein it differs from any other system of object-teaching), as he is enabled to become a useful, productive member of society, and to that end his individuality and his power of self-expression must be fostered from the beginning of life.

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The Gift-Plays Train the Faculties

All the gift-plays, too, train the faculty of speech, for there is constant question and answer, comment and observation while using them. Pleasant incidents and stories are told also, and the child is encouraged to express his own ideas and fancies as far as his small powers admit. This procedure develops the imagination, so strong a power in childhood and so valuable a factor in mental and spiritual growth, and turns it into a useful channel.

We are accustomed to say that the kindergarten is a school of the moralities, and no one can watch a group of children at work with the gifts without noting that the ordinary, humdrum but useful virtues of industry, economy, perseverance, and carefulness are in close attendance upon each small worker, and that he cannot dispense with their aid. However skeptical one may be as to the value of these objects in general, he cannot fail to acknowledge their worth as a preparation for later school work, and practical, hard-headed persons, who are disposed to think there must be

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something wrong with the kindergarten because it is so agreeable to the child, are often converted when they are made to see how perfectly the form and number work prepare for geometry and arithmetic; how the training of the hand in the various employments makes writing a simple matter, and how the constant education of the eye in dealing with distances, spaces, and lengths, judging and comparing differing lines, angles, and designs, is an absolute preparation for learning to read. If the limits of a handbook admitted, a great deal might be said as to the bearing of the gifts on more advanced studies, of the side-lights they give on philosophy and architecture, of the special way in which they address the judgment and the reasoning faculty, and a volume might easily be written on their connection with the arts and industries.

All these subjects, however, can only be suggested here in the hope that the Study Clubs, projected in the first chapter, may take them as texts for sermons which experience will enable them to write, and

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which they can use for the awakening of enthusiasm in the community of which they form a part.

The Motto of the Kindergarten Gifts

One more word on a supremely valuable feature of the gift exercises must be said just here, however, and that is on the opportunity they offer for concerted action. If the kindergartner or mother who conducts them allows each child to work alone, intent upon the perfecting of his own desires, without thought for others, without consideration of the common welfare, she neglects the highest opportunity for good which any system of education can offer.

The "together spirit" is the key-note of the age, not less than the motto of the American people; and Froebel shows his wonderful foresight, his prescience of the needs of a coming time, when he makes provision for coöperation even in the play-work he devised for the veriest babies. Whether they build a village together, whether they mass their sticks or tablets to form a common design, whether they

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construct something to please the smaller children, who are not so deft in handling the material, whether they combine their taste and skill in decorating the room, still this thought, "Each for all, and all for each," must constantly be kept in mind if kindergarten work is really to develop the spiritual nature of the child and prepare him for ideal citizenship, as it claims to do.*

Gifts Which May be Used at Home

The question is often asked whether these playthings may be used in the home, and which of them are best adapted to the purpose. To begin with, the first gift (six soft worsted balls in the colours of the spectrum—red, yellow, blue, green, orange, and violet) was intended by Froebel for nursery use, and he gives in the "Pedagogics of the Kindergarten" and in his "Letters" many wise and practical suggestions for dealing with it. There are many ball plays, too, outlined in the kin-

* Practical suggestions for group work under each gift and each occupation are to be found in "The Republic of Childhood," Vols. I and II.

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dergarten guides, and any intelligent mother who has the true play spirit can adapt the exercises to her own conditions and her personal needs.

Lessons in Form and Colour

The second gift (wooden sphere, cube, and cylinder) requires somewhat more work and thought to make it useful and interesting, though all children are delighted with the plays which show the three forms whirling on their different axes, disclosing surprises in the shape of new geometric figures revolving within. Then there are the second gift beads—tiny wooden reproductions of the three type-forms (coloured and uncoloured)—which furnish delightful nursery occupations, assorting them according to form and colour, stringing them on stout shoe-laces in various ways, and using them, with sticks thrust through their holes, for soldiers, and children, and fence-posts, and trees, and telegraph poles, and what not.

For the building-blocks, the sticks, the rings, and the points, tables are necessary,

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either marked off in inch squares, or covered with squared oilcloth, which may be bought at the kindergarten supply stores. The fifth, sixth, and seventh gifts are much more difficult than the others, and contain such wonderful capabilities for building and advanced geometrical work that it would be best, perhaps, to leave them to the management of a trained kindergartner.

The cubes and bricks of the first two building gifts, the eighth, ninth, and tenth gifts (sticks, rings, and points), may very well be used in the nursery in simple exercises, manifold suggestions for which may be found in all technical books on the kindergarten. All these objects are inexpensive, but the balls may easily be made at home, a sample set being purchased to show the size and exact colours; the sphere, cube, and cylinder may be turned out by any man who can use a lathe if the requisite dimensions are given, and even the cubes and bricks of the third and fourth gifts may be made by the father of the family if he is a good tool-worker.

All these blocks must be thoroughly well

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made, however; the proportions must be perfect and the surfaces carefully finished, or there will be great difficulty of balance and consequent distress when the children are using them. More than this, exactness and accuracy are insisted upon in every kindergarten exercise, and it would be impossible to require them of the pupils unless exact and accurate materials were furnished.

The results from the gift work will undoubtedly be much more satisfactory if it is conducted by a good kindergartner; but if the organisation of a kindergarten is a matter which must be left until there is sufficient public interest to demand one, the children of the neighbourhood need not therefore be deprived of all the advantages which come from this cunningly devised series of objects.

The members of the Study Club must take up the gifts and give them serious and thoughtful attention; each little object, no matter how trifling it may seem, must be considered not only in itself but in its relation to what has preceded and what will

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follow it; there must be clear understanding of its special uses and of its worth to the child, or little good can come of its employment.

All the students, whether they are to use them at home or not, should handle and become familiar with the objects, should follow sequences and dictations and devise new figures and combinations with the different materials. That was a wise remark of Lord Bacon's, that it takes much knowledge and wisdom to impart the right little successfully, and it is of application here.

Introduce the Gifts Step by Step

Finally, if the gifts are employed in the nursery, see to it that they are introduced consecutively, step by step, never taking up a new object until a fair knowledge of the last one has been gained, and then using the two together for a season; see to it that each day's play has a purpose behind it, and is both hand-work and head-work, not the former alone; reserve a special time for using the playthings, and, lest too great familiarity breed contempt,

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have them put away carefully when the period has expired; insist, also, that the building-blocks be put together into their original form before the box is turned over them, and the balls, beads, sticks, and rings laid neatly in their trays or baskets.

Remember also, though the children may be busy with the materials, that there is a great deal of difference, as Froebel says, between "free creative activity and aimless, purposeless activity," and strive for the busyness of the squirrel storing nuts for the winter, rather than the restless energy of the same creature madly flying around his wheel.

And one more thing remember, that it is in these baby exercises that we are supposed to be forming habits of concentration and attention, and to this end we must see to it, before we begin upon them, that every child is ready to hear and to do, that he has his mind fixed on the thing in hand, and that he devotes himself absolutely to the brief play, whatever it may be, so long as it continues.

These are the minor things to remem-

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ber, if anything may be counted minor in these matters, and the major are that the gifts shall be so used that not only the physical powers may be developed and the mental faculties trained, but the spiritual nature addressed and the whole human creature given a little upward impetus toward those things that are pure, those things that are lovely and of good report.

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CHAPTER III

WHAT SHALL WE MAKE?

Do you remember, when you were a child, the pastimes you delighted in? Do you remember making sand-pies, pricking holes in paper, stringing seeds and flowers and nuts, plaiting book-marks and May-baskets, folding pussy-cat stairs, playing cat's cradle, drawing pictures with slate and lead pencil, cutting out figures, sewing on stray bits of cloth with your thread tied into your needle? Do you remember all these things, and, as you read them over, do they not recall to you happy summer mornings out of doors, busy rainy days by mother's side, and bright, firelit evenings when you watched in delighted admiration father's skilful fingers as he fashioned stars and rosettes, and paper caps and fly-traps, and boats that would sail?

If you have not forgotten, if you can look back into the past and see again that

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child of long ago, can recall his thoughts and feel his heart-throbs, then, and only then, can you fully appreciate the happiness which the kindergarten occupations bring to the child of to-day. They are founded on the old pastimes, those which are more or less familiar to the children of every civilised country ; and Froebel gathered them up from his own recollections and from his close observation of simple German family life, and transferred them to the kindergarten. There he systematised them, cut out those of little educational value, arranged them in consecutive order, pruned here, introduced new features there, supplied a missing link in another place, until, after years of experiment, he had a complete series of occupations based not only on the traditional employments of children, but—and this is a noteworthy fact—on the primitive arts and industries of mankind. Drawn from such a source, arranged by so wise a thinker, so sympathetic and skilled an observer of children, it is no wonder that the occupations seem absolutely to fit every need and

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every desire of the little people of the kindergarten.

They stand, as Froebel left them, in the following order, some, of course, being of much more importance than others and some being little used to-day.

The Kindergarten Occupations Explained

The occupation of pricking or perforating is the outlining of objects, the making of lines, angles, and geometrical forms on paper or cardboard by means of a stout needle set in a wooden handle.

In sewing, with a blunt needle and worsteds of appropriate colour, the child outlines objects, lines, or pictures which have been transferred to cardboard and perforated at proper intervals.

Kindergarten drawing is of several kinds: the making of lines, angles, and figures on checkered slates and paper; the tracing around cardboard patterns—a thing which children always enjoy, and the purely free-hand work, or what one might call the first steps in sketching from Nature.

For paper-interlacing, which is rather a

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difficult employment, bright coloured strips a quarter of an inch or more in width and a foot or so long are provided. They are then doubled once, twice, or thrice their entire length and folded into symmetrical figures, into which, when completed, other or similar figures are intertwined, producing charming designs.

For slat-interlacing, thin strips of any tough wood half an inch wide and about ten inches long are used. At least four slats are needed to make a complete figure which will hold together without pasting or sewing, but many times this number may be used, and by the employment of different lengths and widths of slats, and varying combinations, the figures may be made very pretty and even serviceable.

Weaving, Paper Cutting and Folding

In weaving, the child is given a square or oblong mat of bright paper cut in strips from one-half to one-eighth of an inch in width, as desired, and, fastening other strips of harmonising or contrasting colours into a long steel needle, he runs them into

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the mat, producing innumerable charming patterns, which vary according to the numerical combinations he uses.

The name paper-cutting is self-explanatory, although the work in the kindergarten includes not only cutting out pictures, but dividing squares, triangles, and circles according to a regular system, and making designs with the pieces.

In paper-folding, the boats and boxes and pin-wheels of long ago are made, and also a great quantity of flat and symmetrical figures which are produced by very slight changes from a regular ground-form.

Peas-Work and Clay-Modelling

The peas-work is really delightful, though not at all easy, except in its first steps. Slender, pointed sticks are used, and peas which have been soaked over night ; and connecting the former by the latter, skeletons of geometrical solids, and of all kinds of playthings, as tools, carts, houses, and furniture, are very easily made.

Last comes the modelling in clay, which needs no description—merely a word of

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tribute to the genius who saw in this dear delight of children a means of intellectual development.

These are the principal kindergarten occupations. There are others—notably bead-stringing, chain-making, cardboard-modelling, rolled strip-work, and the thread game; and then there is the sand-work, which is so important as really to deserve a paper by itself.

Relation of the Occupations to the Gifts

It will be seen, as soon as we begin to study the occupations, that they are closely related to the gifts, using much the same materials, illustrating the same progression (although in the opposite direction) from point to line, line to plane, and plane to solid, laying the same stress upon relations of form and number, cultivating some of the same virtues, and giving the same wide opportunities for individual work or invention. Still there are marked differences between them, prominent among which is that the gift material undergoes no essential change when used, while change is the

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first requisite in dealing with the occupations. We may take the blocks apart and employ them as we like, but at the close of the play they are always returned to the original shape; in the occupation of folding, on the other hand, we begin to modify the square, and to bend it into something else as soon as we take it in our hands.

Another marked point of difference is that the ideas received through the gifts are commonly worked out through the occupations—that is, impression in the one becomes expression in the other.

It would be folly to attempt any comparison between the respective values of the two series, for one is really the complement of the other, and though they travel the same road, they travel it in different vehicles. It is easy to see, however, that most of the occupations may be handled with greater ease and simplicity than the gifts; that they are more akin to the employments with which the mother naturally supplies her child, that they require somewhat less knowledge and skill in teaching, and that therefore she is less liable to

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make mistakes in dealing with them. The gifts, it is probable, are positively harmful to the child if they are not handled in a definite, serious, purposeful way and with a knowledge of their possibilities; but some of the occupations may be conducted by a comparatively inexperienced person, and not only give great pleasure, but be really helpful in minor ways, at least.

Changes in the Occupations

It has been already said that the occupations have undergone considerable modification since Froebel's day, and many of them, like the gifts, are now the subject of experiment in various kindergarten centres.

Pricking, for instance, on account of the eye-strain attendant upon it, is almost out of use; net-work drawing, both for the above reason and because it is supposed to be too mechanical and to lead to designing rather than to nature-work, is also passing away; the thread game, slat and paper interlacing, and peas-work are seldom seen, and the tendency in all the remaining oc-

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cupations is toward larger size in materials, a larger scale in designing, and greater freedom in expression. Much of this change has been rendered necessary by the increased knowledge which modern child-study has given us of the physical development of the child, and the danger of too early engaging him in work demanding great precision and dexterity, small movements and constant tension of the muscles of the eye.

Some of the old-fashioned pastimes, however, notably the thread game, slat and peas work, are most useful and delightful for the home and the nursery, if indeed their educational value is not supposed to warrant their admission to the school, and it is to be understood that the changes in the occupations, both present and future, are and probably will be, not in the line of superseding them altogether, but of modifying and changing them in accordance with recent discoveries in physiology and psychology.

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Kindergarten Work Trains the Hands

And when they are developed to their fullest extent and managed as Froebel intended, what may we expect of them? you ask.

There is a much-used saying in the kindergarten that development according to Froebel is threefold—that is, it includes within its purpose something for the body, something for the soul, and something for the mind. We should expect, then, that the kindergarten occupations would effect something for the physical powers of the child, and we find that they train his arms and hands and fingers so that they become deft servants of his will, and not only the right hand, you understand, but the left, too, for the idea is to make him ambidextrous.

In securing these ends the mind receives development also, and the same thing is true of the eye-training, which is, of necessity, partly mental and partly physical.

If we begin to discuss the intellectual value of the occupations a host of particu-

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lars rises before us, and in the first place we may as well disabuse ourselves of the too common impression that all these employments are easy for the child, so easy that they are the merest baby-play, requiring no concentration nor perseverance, and therefore making but sorry preparation for the difficult work exacted in the school. The remark is made so often in conversation, and is so often seen in print, that it has found lodgment in the public mind, though indeed there is not as much truth in it as could be balanced on the point of a cambric needle.

Kindergarten Work Also Trains the Mind

Kindergarten work is always engrossing, delightful, and fascinating to the child, but it is by no means especially easy, and he who needs conviction on this point has but to give a half-hour's supervision to a class engaged with any one of the occupations in order to find out his error and confess it with tears. The statement is boldly made, then, that the occupations demand great concentration and attention, that

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they also demand observation, and constantly require comparison and judgment. If these five faculties, and these alone, were developed by their means, we might be satisfied, but definite training in colour, form, number, and language is also inseparable from the work. As to the field for creative activity, it is so wide and so fully occupied by the children that the results can only be appreciated by those familiar with the kindergarten. Outsiders are commonly quite unwilling to believe that such and such designs presented for their approbation could possibly have been made by babies of five to six years, and hint that the kindergartner, like the old-fashioned drawing-master, must have supplied most of the finishing touches.

The question is easily enough put to proof, however, for it is only necessary to allow a class free play with any of the materials to see lovely results blossoming on every table without the least suggestion from older persons. And why should this not be so? The seed was there; the kindergarten supplied the proper surround-

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ings for growth, and in due time the flower bloomed.

Moral Bearing of the Occupations

But let us talk together of the moral bearing of the occupations; let us note the perseverance, the neatness, the orderliness of each small worker; let us observe how careful and economical he is in the use of all material; let us admire his long-continued patience in the face of difficulties, his self-restraint when failure makes fresh efforts necessary. In order to witness all these things in a majority of the children, one must, it is true, visit a really good kindergarten; but what then? Is not the ideal that for which we are all striving? Would it be of any value to describe to you what is less than the best?

These occupations, which are so well beloved of childhood, are more useful even than the gifts for coöperative work. Here, for instance, the children are fitting up a doll-house, each contributing a portion of the furnishings; here they are combining their weaving-mats to make a border for

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the blackboard; here they are grouping their paper foldings for a large design to hang on the wall; here each one is modelling a small clay sphere which he will afterward paint, and thus a fine box of marbles will be provided for a sick playmate. In no case is the work allowed to be a selfish possession for one child alone; the joy in production and achievement is made to grow, as far as possible, from the thought that some one else is to be made happier thereby.

Make a Neighbourhood Kindergarten

Ah, you say in surprise, if these things be true what a storehouse of virtues and graces is here to be drawn upon; what intelligent mother would dare to reject such riches for her children! Let her see to it, then, that each one of her brood receives his rightful share of the inheritance, and if he cannot be taken to the kindergarten let the kindergarten be brought to him.

If there are four or five children within reach gather this handful together and make a neighbourhood child-garden; if you

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live in a lighthouse and have only one child, still do what you can. Much may be accomplished even though the blessed influence of companionship is denied to your little one.

If you are a member of one of the Study Clubs already suggested for those communities too small to employ a kindergartner, it will be best for you to take up the occupations in detail as a subject of serious attention. You can never hope that the child will accomplish anything worthy with them unless you know them yourself practically as well as theoretically, and unless you recognise their difficulties and their possibilities.

The Best Occupations for the Home

There are a number of technical works on the occupations that the members of the clubs may study and read together, and there are plates included in some of them (and to be had separately also) which show the ordinary "schools of work" in each employment—that is, a systematic course, part or all of which the child is to follow,

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but which is constantly to be diversified by original production. These schools may be studied and practised by older persons until they understand clearly the preliminary steps to be taken in each branch of work and have had some experience in invention.

The occupations best fitted for little children in the home—those which can be conducted with some success by a person untrained or self-trained in kindergarten work—are sewing, drawing, and painting, weaving, cutting, folding, peas-work, clay-modelling, bead-stringing, and chain-making.

The last two of these are very simple and suitable for the merest babies, and so indeed is modelling, although adapted as well to older children and to the adult.*

Bead-stringing has always been a nursery pastime, but it is not advisable that very young children should use the tiny bits of glass generally provided for the purpose,

* "The Republic of Childhood," Vol. II, contains, in each chapter upon the occupations, hints for home and school work, with all the materials.

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since there is some nervous strain in handling the delicate needle and thread which are requisite, and in finding the small opening in the bead.

The larger glass or porcelain beads, either round or cylindrical, which are made in Germany in great quantities, are suitable for stringing, and so are the wooden kindergarten beads—spheres, cubes, and cylinders. A stout cord, wire, or shoe-lace is to be preferred for the exercise, and it is to be remembered that some sequence, or arrangement in number, colour, or form, is to be emphasized, or the work will remain only finger-work.

Chain-making, which is merely the pasting together in link form of strips of coloured paper two inches long perhaps and one-third inch wide, is always enjoyed by babies, and so are the daisy-chains made by alternately stringing bits of straw and paper; but it cannot be too much emphasized that no faded colours, soiled and crumpled papers, or badly cut materials are to be used for this work. Everything must be fresh, bright, and dainty, or we

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can hardly exact the same qualities from the finished product.

Paper-tearing is something which all children delight in, and which can be made valuable as well as pleasant to them. They may first tear long strips of newspaper carefully, afterward using them fastened to a stick as fly-brooms, perhaps, and then, from more attractive paper, tear circles, squares, and finally simple forms, such as houses, boats, and furniture.

As to weaving, care must be taken not to use too finely cut papers; and it is as well to begin with oilcloth mats and wooden slats, passing from these, when the art is learned, to woollen mats and strips, which can be woven, still using the fingers, to make holders, mats, carpets for doll-houses, etc. Cane and rush weaving, for which manuals can be obtained, are excellent employments for older children, and if the connection of the employment with art and industry is to be understood, it is best that they should see a loom at work, and note the devices for unwinding the warp as it is taken up by the weaving,

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and for raising and lowering alternate sets of strings as the wool or rags is passed through. Simple models of wooden looms are to be had, and are particularly useful for group work.

Modelling in Clay

The clay-modelling is the most valuable art material the kindergarten holds, perhaps, and one of the most universally attractive. It is really ideal work for little children, as it entails no strain on eye or fingers, is easily handled, pleasant to the touch, responsive to fancy, and adapted to making many objects of infantile desire in the way of balls, marbles, beads for stringing, as well as the fashioning of geometrical forms, tea-sets, furniture, fruits, leaves, vegetables, flowers, and animals. Let no prejudice in regard to its dusty or soiling qualities deter the mother from using it. The prejudice is, in fact, unfounded, for if the children are taught to be ordinarily neat, and if they use trays or oilcloth-covered tables for their work, no harm is done to clothes or furniture, and, as for hands,

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no child but would willingly scrub them afterward to a lobster-like redness if he might but have the dear delight of this idealised mud-pie making.

The more the mother or teacher knows of the possibilities and limitations of the clay, the greater will be her pupils' successes, of course; but no person of ordinary intelligence can conduct modelling with children without giving them great pleasure, and teaching them, and herself at the same time, many a useful lesson.

For most of the remaining occupations considerable study and practice are undoubtedly necessary, but so many helps in the work are now to be had that fair success may be expected if only the matter be given its full share of time and importance. The sewing cards may be made at home; the drawing materials are to be found in every nursery; the colored paper for chains, for cutting, and for folding may be prepared by the mother if she is exact and careful and not averse to constant ruling and measuring, and it is a simple matter to mix the clay for moulding. The beads,

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of course, must be bought, and so must the paper for the weaving, and, for that matter, so must all the other materials unless they can be furnished *fresh, accurately cut, correct and attractive in colour, and precise in measurement.*

Mothers Should Understand the Occupations

It is certain that the mother who makes a determined effort to understand the kindergarten occupations herself, and to employ them for the benefit of her child, will be a thousand times repaid both in those things which she can see without effort and in those which she must take on trust.

As to the visible benefits, she cannot help perceiving that they assist, like the gifts, in preparing for the studies of the school, that they form an admirable preparation for later work in the arts and industries, that they make the child more resourceful, more apt at amusing himself and providing amusement for others, and, finally, that they not only assist in fostering the simple virtues and in forming habits of industry,

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economy, and order, but give a mental training which will be of the greatest possible service by and by, when the little one becomes a member of the world's great army of workers.

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CHAPTER IV

NATURE'S TOYS AND PASTIMES

THE educational employments and pastimes which Froebel worked out or suggested are by no means confined to balls and blocks and sticks, or to designing, moulding, and manipulating bits of paper. He was too great a lover of Nature in all her moods and ways, had felt too keenly the wisdom, peace, and strength she gives her votaries, to be willing to omit her teachings from his ideal scheme of human development. Many things that he recommended, having to do with Nature and the life of Nature, have been passed over or neglected by the teacher, and largely because the kindergarten in America has been so much a feature of crowded city life, has been so far removed from the ideal conditions in regard to space and situation, that care of and companionship with animals, for instance, or sowing the seed and tend-

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ing the plants, have been quite out of the question.

Advantages of Country Life

Here the women to whom this little handbook is chiefly addressed, those who live in the country or in villages and small towns away from the centres of civilisation, may exult in one of their great advantages, for their children have room enough to live and to grow in and to learn Nature's lessons at first hand. That such a life is an ideal one for the little child would be affirmed probably by every one who had lived it himself, and that it was so considered by Froebel there is abundant testimony in the songs, text, and illustrations of the "Mother-Play."

Children's Gardens

Every child, if you would bring him up on kindergarten principles, should have his own garden, however small it may be, and should till it himself with such help in the heavier work as may be necessary. It should not be a thing granted for one

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summer and denied the next, as of little worth and much trouble, but should be of unfailing return like the seasons. Nor should the gardener have too much dictation from older persons as to what he shall plant and how he shall arrange it, nor should it be commanded that he shall keep his vegetables and his flowers separate.

If he thinks that he prefers sweet peas and onions growing side by side, let him have them so. Good taste is only a finer discrimination; and how are you to discriminate without experience? There is nothing more interesting than the miracle of growth, and no child but will watch with a passion of delight the stirring of the ground by the green shoots, their gradual emergence, strong and determined, pushing aside all obstacles, to the light they love, their daily development of characteristics which mark their race inheritance, and finally their maturity and fruition. A great impression of the inevitable nature of cause and effect—a useful thing in education—comes to the child with the first perception that whatsoever a man soweth

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that shall he also reap, and that however ardently you may wish and pray for a crop of cabbages, it is all of no avail if you have not planted cabbage-seed.

Lessons Learned by the Gardener

All the lessons, too, which come to the gardener of the dependence upon him of his vegetable family are of a softening and developing kind. He must be patient with bad weather and slow growth, he must be watchful of foes within and without, he must keep back invading weeds, loosen the soil, and provide water when needful. The child only learns the first line of all these lessons, to be sure, and he requires a teacher for the task, but he is learning by doing, and that makes all the difference.

City Prisoners

If, on the other hand, your child be a prisoner of the city, the joys of gardening need not be altogether denied to him, for if there is absolutely no earth-room, no tiny spot of hard ground that can be made productive, there are few dwelling-places

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where one may not have somewhere a large box of soil for the growing of a few hardy flowers and small vegetables. If even that be denied, there is always window gardening to do—sweet potatoes and carrots and parsnips to be hollowed out and filled with water, sponges to sow with seed, bulbs to grow in glasses, and flowers to tend in pots and boxes. Anything so that we may have a garden—“that divine filter that filters all the grossness out of us, and leaves us, each time we have been in it, clearer and purer, and more harmless.”

Employments for Country Children

In connection with and development from this gardening come a great many employments for the country child, or for him who has country holidays. Perhaps you know them already, or have you forgotten them—the platted wreaths of leaves we used to make, the dandelion and daisy and lilac chains, and those charming ones of hollyhock buds, the poppy dollies, the furniture of burdock burrs, and the plump, prettily decorated sand and mud pies?

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And here enter, too, most appropriately, drawing and painting from Nature—not landscapes, of course, but simple flowers, leaves, and fruit with which the children, because not too much fettered by rule, and by dint of loving the work, often attain surprisingly good results.

Children Natural Collectors

Children naturally delight in collecting, and they can easily be led to gather and press leaves and flowers and ferns and sea-moss, to seek out nuts and seeds and pods of various shapes and arrange them in boxes, and to pick up and classify small pebbles and shells and minerals.

These collections, it must be owned, are often somewhat of a trial to the neat and careful housewife, but if they are confined within certain limits and not allowed to stray beyond them, they may well be borne, in view of their healthy effect upon the child. They keep him busy, and wisely busy, with things which are his natural playthings; they teach him discrimination, order, and classification, and they lead him

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to inexhaustible wonder at the treasures of the universe.

“ The world is so full of a number of things
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings,”

is the sweet, wholesome thought of every child who is learning from Nature.

And when the seasons of growing and blooming and harvesting are over, the small collector finds that he has provided for himself delightful employments for the winter; for there are his stores to be arranged and rearranged and re-rearranged *ad infinitum*, with ever fresh perceptions of their beauty and value; there is designing at the kindergarten tables with the glossy seeds and nuts and shining pebbles and delicate shells, and there are drawing and brush-work still to be continued from the treasures he has gathered in the long summer hours.

Care of Pet Animals

Just as clearly as Froebel traces in all his writings the path which the mother should follow in leading the child to a love

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and understanding of the plant and vegetable world, so he indicates the value to him of the care and companionship of animals. One of the earliest songs in the "Mother-Play" is "Calling the Chickens," in which the baby in his mother's arms is taken to see the pretty feathered babies, and led to feel that they love him as much as he is drawn toward them. "Calling the Pigeons" follows, "The Fish in the Brook," "The Barnyard Gate," and other songs, each framed to give a different lesson. "The Barnyard Gate" is only a development of the practice common in every country of teaching the baby to imitate and distinguish between animal sounds—a practice so instinctive that the Indian mother in the far West and the Alaskan in her northern snows doubtless ask their papposes what the coyote and the seal say; as naturally as we question, "What does the duck say, baby?" Froebel believes that the child often gets his first idea of motherly care and tenderness from the sight of a hen and chickens, or of a bird and her young, and that so he grows to see, as

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by reflected light, his own relation to the home-nest.

If the child is so fortunate as to live in the country, or in country conditions, all this animal life is provided for him; if in a cramped city house, it is next door to impossible that he should have it, save at the cost of pain and discomfort to the pets, a price which to pay would defeat the very object we are striving to attain.

If they may not live by his side, he can at least be taken to see them, and here zoölogical gardens and parks stocked with sheep and deer, peacocks and swans, are of inestimable value if the child is allowed to see them quietly and at leisure, and to linger by those which interest him, and is not pulled about from one to the other at the will of his care-taker. You may not enjoy monkeys, for instance, and a brief glance in their all-too-human faces is even more than you desire, but you can be certain that your child will utterly fail to sympathise with your feelings, and may make up your mind to self-sacrifice in advance.

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Responsibility for Pets

It is really not enough, however, merely to see these things: the ideal requires that the child take care of them, learn their likes and dislikes, and grow to feel his responsibility as their providence. If he accepts the charge of a bird, a guinea-pig, a puppy, or a kitten, let it be understood that he is to let nothing, no play or frolic, interfere with his care for it at stated hours, for it must be clearly comprehended at the beginning that we cannot have the pleasure of anything without being willing to pay its price. There is no childish fault which, in the writer's opinion, should be more severely punished than cruelty to one of these dumb creatures, and none which so requires immediate and early checking that it may not develop into positive vice by and by.

When all other pets are out of the question in the household, it is often feasible to have an aquarium, and indeed it makes an interesting addition to any collection, however varied.

It is possible at small expense to make

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one at home ; and if the subject is sufficiently studied as to balance of plant and animal life, and amount and kind of food and water, the children may assist in taking care of it, and so gain a great deal of pleasure and knowledge.

There is always, too, a possibility of scattering crumbs and seed for the wild birds in spring and fall and winter, and some children of long ago derived the greatest possible delight, we remember, one season, from keeping a kind of bird-restaurant, and providing in one convenient place assorted kinds of food much enjoyed by the feathered patrons.

Bands of Mercy

It is in all these small ways, you see, that we develop the child's heart, so little touched by ordinary schemes of education; that we train his faculties of observation and judgment, and that we give him a due sense of responsibility. We believe that every Mother's Club should have a Band of Mercy in connection with its work, should muster companies of gallant Bird

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Defenders among its associate members, and should inculcate by example and precept and direct teaching that care and tenderness toward all things, both great and small, which is the first step toward true worship of their Maker.

Play with Sand

There is yet another simple, normal occupation for children, used in the kindergarten, but quite as suitable for the home, and that is playing with sand. No one who lived within reach of a sand-pile as a child, or who was ever taken to the seashore to dig and build there to his heart's content, can help a retrospective thrill of delight as he thinks of those happy baby hours.

And think how simple it is, if you have any out-door room for the children, to place a load of sand in some convenient spot, enclose it with a board or two to prevent its spreading, and arrange some sort of awning or covering above for warm or wet days. There all the children, even to the baby, may be deposited for an hour or

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so a day, and if provided with spades, pails to fill and empty, and some building materials, would not change their lots for those of all the crowned heads in Europe.

If your children, poor city prisoners, have no playground, provide for them indoors a stout water-tight box, about five feet long by four wide, and at least a foot deep, set on legs with castors; fill that with sand, buy smaller spades and pails, and a variety of tins for cake-baking, and sun yourself in the delight you are giving.

Here all the kindergarten gifts, rather small for the out-door work, may be appropriately used; here we may plant trees and load their branches with magnificent fruit represented by the balls; here we may pasture toy animals, fencing them in with the second gift beads threaded on sticks; here we may build houses, barns, whole villages, if desired, with the blocks, and here we may lay out flower-beds and design miniature gardens to our heart's content.

If any mother here lifts up her voice and

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protests that she has no room for even a sand-table, suggest to her a deep tray hinged to the wall and folded against it when not in use. This may have an opening in the bottom, through which the sand may be emptied when the play is over, and no child, be sure, would ever complain of the work of making the plaything ready.*

This sand-work, of whatever kind it may be, is especially beneficial because it provides so many opportunities for united action. The children gather about the heap or table together, and together learn to play, frequently combining their efforts toward some desired end.

Sand differs from other play-materials also in that it is quite as delightful for the baby, who does little but fill his vessels with it and empty them again, as for the more skilful child, who builds houses, fortresses, and castles, and lays out relief-maps of all countries with the responsive, easily handled substance.

* Extended suggestions on the use of sand will be found in "Republic of Childhood," Vol. II.

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Simple, Natural Occupations

There is much to be said about these simple, natural occupations for children, much one might claim as to the serenity and vigour they bring, just because they are simple and natural. The quieter and more undisturbed our little ones are, the more freedom they are given to wander in the fields and play in the brook and dig in the ground, the less they are occupied with exciting sights and complicated toys—elaborate dolls, puzzling contrivances that need winding up, perfect mechanical inventions that require no labour of small hands to complete them—the more normal and rational human beings are they likely to become, and the more complete and unfettered will be their development.

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CHAPTER V

COME, TELL US A STORY

SELIM, son of Auz, is said to have been the first Egyptian story-teller, but as the date when he charmed his audiences is given as only a few thousand years ago, and as Egypt is the seat of one of the most ancient of civilisations, we are forced to believe that he must have had a vast company of humble predecessors.

Indeed—for this is woman's century and woman's country, and we may fearlessly say what we like of ourselves—it would not at all surprise us to learn that the first Egyptian story-teller was the daughter, not the son of anybody, and that her achievements have never been properly recorded.

Women as Story-Tellers

We wonder in these days of the exaltation of women that more has not been said of their services to literature as preservers

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of the nursery tales of all nations. Most of the modern collections in this line, for instance, so valuable to adults as well as to children, were taken down, substantially as they stand, from the lips of women whose memories were as fragrant with the old tales as a rose-jar of its spicy contents.

And it is no cause for wonder that this should be so, for since the beginning of the world mothers have been story-tellers, forced to practise the art whether they would or not, and since it was not considered essential that they should receive instruction in the schools, a larger capacity remained in their minds for the storage of myth and fable and legend. When we talk to women of story-telling, then, we talk to them of something which should be theirs by inheritance as much as an aptitude for needlework, although, like that art, it needs practice to attain perfection. The word mother presupposes the word child, and the child who does not care for stories is as difficult to find as the pot of gold at the foot of the rainbow, so incredi-

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ble a creation, indeed, that it would be waste of time to search for him.

The story has commonly been told no doubt in all times, more to amuse the little people and to keep them quiet than for any deeper reason, and such instruction as it might have conveyed was given unconsciously. It is by no means universally understood, even now, that it is at once literature and the drama, science and history, to the youthful mind, nor that it is one of the most valuable means which a mother can employ for giving moral guidance and bringing the force of example to bear upon the child's intelligence.

Stories Which Have Decided Destinies

There are many cases in which a well-told story is of marked effect in determining the course of future life and occupation. A noted genealogist, for instance, traces his interest in kin and lineage, and the bent of his manhood's labours, to the thrilling tale he often heard as a child at his grandfather's knee, of the founder of the family, who was thrown upon these

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coasts, a shipwrecked sailor, many a year ago. The anecdote was so well told, with a wealth of picturesque detail, and therefore so often demanded, that it made a deep impression upon his imagination, and as he pondered over it from day to day, it became a nucleus around which all his thoughts were centred.

Some of our greatest novelists, Sir Walter Scott, for instance, have attributed their success in weaving tales of romance and adventure to their childhood memories of nurses' bed-time stories, of ballads told on winter evenings round the fire, and of gallant deeds of history proudly recounted over and over, again and again, in the home circle.

When the heart is young, the mind fresh and unworn, it is then that we receive these ineffaceable impressions, and then that our lives get their bent for time and eternity, for

“ . . . we live by Admiration, Hope, and Love,
And ev'n as these are well and wisely fix'd,
In dignity of being we ascend.”

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Literary Interest in the Bud

The veriest baby feels and shows a pleasure in hearing rhymes and jingles, attracted by the musical voice and the cadence of syllables rather than the meaning, no doubt, yet thereby gaining a power of attention which will be of service later in life. This is, perhaps, the beginning of interest in literature; or if it may not be called by so lofty a name, may at least be considered the first steps toward joy in the music of verse.

If we should try to catalogue the benefits derived by the child from an early and a constant hearing of the right kind of stories, we would be surprised at the bulky volume that would grow under our hands. The trouble is that we do not take these things seriously enough, and fail to realise what we are doing when we minister to the child's instinctive hunger for literature. To quiet him with the first tale that comes to mind is like drugging a baby to sleep, or feeding him with some substance which will create a hurtful appetite by and by. Doubtless we may cultivate a taste for read-

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ing by so doing, but that is by no means only and always a blessing. Better the child should never open a book at all than that he should poison his mind and lower his ideals by feeding upon dime novels, vulgar newspapers, and cheap railway fiction, or upon those higher-priced and more artistically handled literary productions whose style can but give delight, while their subject-matter darkens and degrades every mind into which it filters.

It seems to be considered by some parents that the ideal to be reached with a child is that he should be able to sit quiet and read, forgetting that the flood of cheap newspapers, books, and magazines now sweeping over every country may have brought to his lips the rankest poison, or, if not that, some lowering, enfeebling substance, instead of a tonic or a stimulant. When we note what young people are reading everywhere, in horse-cars and trains, in stations and hotels, in stables and kitchens, in shops and barracks, in cottages and mansions, we wonder if the Chinese did well

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when they invented printing, and whether the cheapness of modern literature may not be counted as much for evil as for good in education.

Taste in Literature a Growth

The lack of efficient oversight in young people's reading is partly due, no doubt, to the belief that good taste in literature is something that inevitably comes with maturity, like long dresses and tail coats, and which therefore need not be prepared for, forgetting that taste is a matter of experience and judgment and cultivation, and must have its humble beginnings like every other good thing.

Some Little Heroes Whom Children Love

If we take the subject of story-telling on the moral side we see at once that the heroes of our histories become ideals upon which the little one unconsciously forms himself. Listen to the echoes of your own childhood, if you doubt the statement, and see if a story of long ago does not come back to you, a faint, far-off strain that

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once made the music of your days. Sometimes such a memory furnishes deep conviction of the truth of an educational theory, for

“ The eye grown dim to present things
Has keener sight for bygone years,
And sweet and clear, to deafening ears
The bird that sang at morning sings.”

Do you remember how you repented not sharing your cake with your sister when the shocking avarice of King Midas was held up to your scorn ?

Do you remember how you shuddered at the very thought of disobedience when that unfortunate little maid—what was her name?—defied her mother's commands and was lost in the dark forest? Do you remember Harry and his dog Trusty, and how the boy was put to bed on the day of his birthday party because he abused his faithful companion ?

Do you recall that small heroine who, left alone in the lighthouse, climbed the tower and lighted the lamp herself to save the sailors tossing in the storm below ?

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And have you forgotten—though of course you have not, nobody could—that heroic Dutch boy who, discovering the leak in the dyke, stopped it with his own hand, and sat there all the night, cold, hungry, and cramped with pain, until help came in the morning?

These few instances serve to show how stories may quicken the sympathies of children as well as furnish them with hero types. Much thoughtlessness and cruelty might be prevented at the moment and averted for the future if the imagination were sufficiently quickened to see as by reflected light the desires and feelings of others, whether they be kinsfolk with wings and paws or little human brothers. These two are bound together, the imagination and the sympathy, and if you touch the one the other thrills. A charming boy of the writer's acquaintance, for instance, confessed to her one day that it had never occurred to him that birds had any affections or feelings resembling his own, until he heard the story of "The Stolen Nest," and that then he was so filled with

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contrition at his own misdeeds that he hid himself in the haymow to blot them out with tears.

Hearing Stories Quickens the Imagination

If we could prove that story-telling, when properly conducted, is one of the most efficient helps in cultivating the imagination we should have made good its claim to consideration in home and school. For imagination is a power in life because it gives us ideals toward which we may aspire; it is a power in labour because it is allied to invention; it is a power in that it helps us to pass outside our own experience and appreciate the views of others, and it is a power in that it may fill the mind with beautiful images which push out in their growth those which are vicious and degraded.

“Train the imagination,” says Richter, “and a child can play by himself,” and if this sometimes most desirable end could be reached, there is no overworked, harassed mother but would gladly do her part toward bringing it about.

Shall we make further additions to our

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list of the benefits of story-telling? We may find them in the habit of concentrated attention to which it gives rise, in the new and valuable words it adds to the vocabulary, and in the pleasant introduction it makes to science and history as well as to literature.

Listening to Stories Trains the Voice

It is valuable, too, in a very practical way as a means of vocal training. The child who is accustomed to hearing well-told stories is necessarily accustomed to a well-modulated voice, used with proper inflection and appropriate expression.

What he constantly hears he cannot choose but imitate, for he is a creature of imitation, and this not only helps to form his ordinary speech, but passes onward into school life and makes him a clear and expressive reader when the time for oral reading comes.

Telling, Not Reading the Stories

Kindergartners believe that if the best results are to come from story-telling it

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should be begun very early—long before interest in books has made its appearance, and that in the simplest way it may be practised as soon as the baby begins to talk—indeed, as soon as he begins to understand what his mother or his nurse says to him.

We advocate telling the tales rather than reading them because, first, it is the method by which the race received them when the world was young, and therefore inherently suitable to the young child.

Second, we come into much closer relation with the hearer in this way, and are better able to adopt voice and manner, gesture and length of recital to the transparent needs so near at hand. Again, the narrative seems much more real and impressive and personal, much more a “truly story,” as the children say, if it seems to come direct from the heart rather than from a cold, printed page; and, lastly, in reading, the eyes are hidden, and to young children the expression in the eyes of their mothers during the recital of either a rhyme or a story seems absolutely necessary to its complete comprehension.

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It is questionable whether we ever entirely outgrow the feeling that we can understand better when we can see the face of the speaker; for notice the shifting of seats, the bending and twisting that go on in church to get within the range of the minister's eyes, although his voice may be audible in every part of the building.

Notice, too, the immediate effect upon the congregation when he lays aside his notes, takes off his spectacles, and illustrates some point of his sermon by an anecdote. "When I was in Jerusalem," he begins, and immediately the drowsy awake, and all wandering eyes are turned upon him.

Mothers Should Learn the Art

There is obviously great diversity in natural gift for the art we are urging upon our readers. Some women are "born story-tellers," as the saying is, and these are by no means always educated persons—in fact, are likely to be the opposite, for too early and too much reading often weaken the memory and the power of lively narration. Let us agree at the out-

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set that some mothers have little aptitude for this branch of child culture, that they find it difficult to learn and can never hope to excel in it. What then? The only recourse is to begin very early when the children are quite undeveloped, confident that by the time they shall have become critical we, by much practice, shall have grown nearer to perfection. It is folly to say that we cannot learn to do these things. We are not called upon to write the stories, nor even to make them over; indeed, it were best not to make the attempt so long as there are masters in literature to do it for us; but if we are thoroughly in earnest, and endowed with ordinary gifts, and with that "deep instinct of parental love which has created all educational systems and institutions," we shall gain a gratifying measure of success in this new field of work.

Mothers' Clubs Should Study the Subject

It will be well for the members of the Mothers' Clubs to take up story-telling as one of their regular subjects of study.

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When the value of the art is understood let certain typical stories be selected—really fine ones which will repay thought and study—and let these be given out to various persons to prepare for the next meeting. The thread of the tale must, of course, be memorised, and as much of the language as will make it fall trippingly from the tongue without breaks or hesitation.

The first story learned it may be necessary to repeat to one's self a score of times before one can feel sure enough of it to tell it aloud, and even then before it is given at the club it would be well to try it with the children and see how those outspoken and competent critics regard it. The second effort will doubtless be much easier, but no work of this kind, however protracted it may be, can be considered wasted, for it gives the best of training to the memory and to the powers of expression, as well as furnishes a valuable test of self-possession and readiness for emergencies.

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Selecting Stories for Young Children

In selecting a tale for young children an important thing for the novice to consider is its length, and here the size of the audience must be counted with as well as the class of homes it represents. Your own child, for instance, who is accustomed to conversation, and has already some command of language, would hear and profit by a story twice as long, perhaps, as would a neglected street waif to whom the exercise is altogether new. It is generally conceded that children of five to seven years do not give close and voluntary attention for more than fifteen minutes at a time, and ten minutes will generally be found quite enough for a really finished tale with considerable dramatic interest, while the first essays in the art need not occupy a third of this time.

The language in which the narrative is clothed must be conceded to be a subject of some importance if we believe that the child is learning the beauties of his mother-tongue as he listens. If, therefore, there be any member of the club who is conscious

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that early associations are stronger than education in her case, and that her expressions are not always absolutely accurate or elegant, it would be well for her to memorise the tale entirely, lest she propagate her errors by trusting too much to her own diction.

Poetry for Little Children

When we speak of telling stories to the little people prose narratives seem to be commonly understood, and as commonly used, but there is no mistake greater than to suppose that children are not susceptible to the charms of poetry. They care more for it, on the contrary, than the majority of grown people, whether for the melody, the rhythm, the rhymes, the short lines, the simplicity and picturesqueness of expression, or for all these reasons together, which make it a thing pleasantly different from common speech. Goethe advised that every child should see a pretty picture and hear a beautiful poem every day, and if we would not banish the charm of poetry from mature life it behooves us to

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follow his advice and subject the child to its influence at the time of greatest susceptibility.

It is unnatural and abnormal, for instance, that in a recent investigation in a Western city of the preferences in reading of one thousand children from nine to fifteen years old, only ten girls and no boys of the former age, and but a small proportion of the older children, should express any interest in poetry. It follows either that little or no verse has been read or repeated to them, and that so the taste is dormant, or that selections appropriate to their years have not been made.

To whatever cause the evil may be due, steps should be taken to correct it, for to be devoid of interest in poetry shuts one off from delight as much as if one were colour-blind or tone-deaf.

A Wise Choice to be Made

If all the benefits which we have outlined are to come from the hearing of stories, it follows that they must be wisely chosen; not only in regard to the moral which

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must be a part of their make-up, not tacked on at the end like a kite-tail, but as to the themes they treat of and the style in which they are treated. When it comes to the task of choosing, it must be acknowledged that not every story which appears even in first-class juvenile periodicals can be recommended as appropriate, and it is, perhaps, best to confide in the children's classics, those which have triumphantly stood the test of time, for general use, interspersing them now and then with a tale of to-day.

We must beware, however, of giving the mind a one-sided development by confining ourselves too much to one branch of literature; we must include in our repertory some well-selected myths, fairy stories which are pure and spiritual in tone, a fable now and then, nature stories, hero tales, animal anecdotes, occasional narratives about good, wholesome children, neither prigs nor infant villains, plenty of fine verses and ballads, as has been said, and, for the older ones of the family, legends, allegories, historic happenings,

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and tales of travel and adventure. These must be administered according to the age and development of the little ones under our care, and diversified to suit their several and particular needs. More explicit or fuller directions can hardly be given without knowledge of the special case in question, for only a quack sells a nostrum warranted to cure every ill of the flesh, no matter when and how administered.

All Children Love the Old Favourites

A large stock of stories is not essential for little children. They feel, as Bulwer said, the beauty and the holiness that dwell in the customary and the old; and they are well pleased—and it is best that it should be so—with hearing the same old favourites repeated again and again, in song or story.

Gestures and Illustrations

We kindergarten people believe in accompanying a story for the babies with natural, descriptive gestures, which seem frequently to illuminate the meaning of the words, and also with pictures or rapid

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sketches, but these are not essential in dealing with a few children in the home.

It is an admirable idea, too, to encourage the children to become illustrators occasionally, for when they are carried away by the spirit of the narrative they occasionally do very good work. Even when this is not the case, their drawings are still valuable, for they show just how much of the plot has been understood, what points have been especially appreciated and most deeply impressed, and also, sometimes, into what dire mistakes and errors the unfortunate storyteller has fallen.

Where May Good Stories be Found?

As to the source whence the best stories for little people may be drawn, the various kindergarten magazines are glad to furnish expert advice on the subject; publishers of the standard juvenile periodicals have always many appropriate books, both in prose and verse, upon their lists; all kindergarten training teachers will count it a pleasure to assist an earnest mother in her quest for good literature, and any intelli-

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gent and experienced kindergartner will cheerfully give directions to the storehouses from which she draws her stock of tales.

The National Congress of Mothers, if a fuller list be required, has just sent out a pamphlet on children's literature which is full of good suggestions and carefully classified, and is provided with a price-list and names of publishers.*

There is no lack of material, then, and no lack of advisers; there is certainly no lack of hearers, for, failing children of our own, there are always the waifs of the hospitals, asylums, shelters, refuges, and foundling homes to whom every right-minded woman's thoughts must go out in love and pity. No, there is no lack but one—that of desire to enter upon this work that blesses him that gives and him that takes, and only one place to find it—in your own heart.

* Many stories and books for children are recommended in "The Republic of Childhood."

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CHAPTER VI

COME AND PLAY WITH US

Do you know those curious artificers who carve long passages from the Koran on the polished shell of a walnut, or inscribe the Beatitudes on a cherry-stone?

Such a craftsman must be the writer who attempts to give the import of the kindergarten songs and games in a single chapter, and, like most of the walnut-shell inscriptions, it will doubtless require to be read by the aid of a magnifying-glass.

It is fortunate, however, that the necessary instrument is already in the hands of every woman who reads this handbook, however poor and humble she may be, and its mountings are wrought of interest and observation and its lenses are of love.

Froebel's songs and games, as he hands them down to us in the "Mother-Play" (*Mutter-und-Kose-Lieder*), were the product of long, patient, and tender observation

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of mother and child as they played freely and unconsciously together. The mother's instincts, thought Froebel, if she be one of God's mothers, are commonly to be trusted in what concerns the welfare of her little one, but since she has ceased to be purely an instinctive creature she needs an explanation and a guide for the impulses which arise within her. She may touch exactly the right note in some play she devises for the baby, but through failure to understand the meaning and importance of her act she may either never repeat it, or, repeating it, omit its essential features.

The Vital Thing in the Mother's Plays

The vital thing in all these fond, caressing mother-plays, this tender, coaxing, half-sportive, half-serious intercourse, is that it shall be begun early enough and seriously enough. The mother errs deeply, says Froebel, and errs to the great detriment of the whole future life of her helpless infant, if she doubts that he is susceptible to her words, actions, feelings, and thoughts.

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He is affected by them as the kernel hidden deep in the earth or the bud on the tree covered by hard scales is sensitive to the return of the spring or even to a warm but evanescent breath of air. And clearly it must be so, Froebel goes on to say, "for that which can develop and originate, and is intended to do so, begins, and must begin, when as yet nothing exists but the conditions." Mrs. Browning, mother and poet too, expressed to perfection the whole philosophy of the thing when she said:

" Women know

The way to rear up children (to be just);
They know a simple, merry, tender knack
Of tying sashes, fitting baby-shoes,
And stringing pretty words that make no sense,
And kissing full sense into empty words;
Which things are corals to cut life upon,
Although such trifles."

Study of the "Mother-Play"

To thoroughly understand Froebel's idea of play and its connection with later knowledge and being, to appreciate his convic-

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tion of the supreme importance of the germ stage of life and what he considers the true relation which should exist between mother and child, it is necessary to give exhaustive study to the "Mother-Play," which is the broad foundation for those "corals to cut life upon," the kindergarten songs and games. Some reference was made to this book in the first chapter of this handbook, and it was advised that the Mothers' Clubs should take it as a subject of serious study. It is full of meaning from cover to cover, and including the cover, which bears a symbolic picture showing the mother with her children, crowned with oak leaves, her eyes turned heavenward, her path strewn with thorns and roses, and the father with his sword and eagle helmet tenderly leading the older son and daughter over the rough stones of life.

Each picture should be carefully studied, for they were all made by Froebel's directions and under his own eye, and are full of significant details. The motto for the mother and the song for the child may then be taken up, and it will be a most

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interesting exercise to see how far their inmost meaning can be deciphered before turning to Froebel's own interpretations which accompany the volume. These, also, need most careful reading and explanation, and it need discourage no one if at first they seem to be somewhat obscure and mystical, for kindergartners who have spent years in studying the book never take it up without finding a new truth somewhere in its pages.

It will be advisable, also, for the different members of the club, remembering that all the infantile experiences given in the book are typical ones, to try and recall corresponding incidents in their own lives and those of their children, and any familiar nursery plays which they may already know that seem to be written on the same lines.

Nor must we be content merely to receive each song as a text for memorising, but we must write a sermon on it and give it a practical application. The thought must be, not only what does the motto mean to me, and what is the deepest truth

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in the child-song, but how can I use both in the nursery, here and now?

Although the essence of the kindergarten games is coöperation, and although we feel that one of their highest values is the training which they give in the social virtues, yet when we study their originals in the "Mother-Play" we discover that they were obviously written for mother and child alone, and need no other and no dearer participants. Here, then, the lonely woman in the lighthouse, and her no less lonely sister on the cattle-ranch or in the mining-camp, uncounted miles from neighbours, may find solace in the thought that Froebel remembered them in their solitude and gave them in this book a means of full development for themselves and their children.

The Games Illustrate Universal Experiences

The games in the "Mother-Play," it should be understood, deal with the universal experiences which come to every child and which every mother will recog-

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nise as familiar. The words Froebel sometimes recalled from his own childhood, sometimes found in use in simple, peasant homes, and he adapted or rewrote the more useful ones for this volume, while he often framed new verses to illustrate instinctive acts of the child which he observed or which were repeated to him.

All the songs—for, alas! the great child-lover was childless himself—were tried from time to time by mothers of his acquaintance with their babies, and were changed as experience seemed to demand, so that all have borne the test of practice.

They begin with the “Kicking Song,” or “Play with the Limbs,” illustrating the common habit of infants of lying on their backs and tramping the feet, as if to anticipate walking. The mother shown in the accompanying picture feels instinctively that the baby seeks for something by which to measure his strength, and holds her hands so that his feet may alternately strike against them, while she sings a song of the mill as it crushes the seeds to make oil for the night-lamp. And this is Froe-

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bel's comment upon the action in the motto:

“ This is not mere fond caprice—
God inspires the pretty strife;
She is leading the beginner
Through the outer to the inner
Of his groping life.”

Games Which Help the Body and the Hands

Next comes the little play called “ Falling, Falling,” which is intended to strengthen the whole body as well as to give a spiritual impression. The infant lies upon a cushion and the mother lifts him a little from his reclining posture, letting him slip back again with a slight shock, just enough to make him realise the difference between here and there, rising and falling, support and loss of support, union and separation, and at the same time leading him to appreciate his own strength.

The next two songs, the “ Weathercock ” and “ All Gone,” will be recognised as old favourites in every nursery, and here the movement of hands and fingers begins and is continued to the end of the book. Froe-

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bel had, of course, noticed that the hands and fingers are the earliest parts of the physical self to attract attention, and his knowledge of that fact is shown by the various songs in which the fingers are named and counted, put to sleep, made to dance and play, and taught to greet each other.

These songs were devised not only to give strength and suppleness to these members, but—and this is far more important—by attaching a playful meaning to their movements, to interest the mind in them and lift them out of the domain of the purely physical.

The finger-songs are favourites in every kindergarten; not only the old “Mother-Play” originals being sung, but numbers of dainty new ones framed on the same lines with which all the standard music books are provided.*

There are songs, too, in the “Mother-Play” for exercising the senses, and these,

* Miss Emelie Poulsson of Boston has written so many of these charming songs, every one of which would be a home delight, that she is beginning to be known as “The Finger-Play Lady.”

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with their modern variants, should be used in every nursery. Mothers have always done a little of this sense-training with an instinctive knowledge of its mental and spiritual value, but Froebel explains to them the meaning of their instinct, and provides ample means to gratify it.

There is a "Pat-a-Cake" song, too, in this wonderful book, even better than our own old favourite; songs about the sweet, familiar things of daily life—chickens, pigeons, birds' nests, flowers, stars, and sunshine; and there are shadow plays that the father can use with the baby at night when the lamps are lighted.

These Mother-Play Songs are All Simple

There are beautiful versions of those games of Bo-Peep and Hide and Seek which every one instinctively plays with babies, and there are games which take up trade life and sing of the joiner, the carpenter, the baker, and the wheelwright. Everything is here, in suggestion at least, down to the Church songs, which close the volume, and to the "Little Artist,"

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wherein the child who is older grown is seeking to give out again the many impressions which have crowded in upon his brain.

There are now three English translations of the "Mother-Play," the latest of which, by Miss Susan Blow, is provided with new music and words for all the songs—music which, as Charles Reade said of the Breton ditties, "is tunable as the lark that carols over the green wheat in April," and "words so simple and motherly that a nation might take them to heart." *

From these "Mother-Play" songs, as already said, the entire scheme of modern kindergarten games is developed, and though all may be played by mother and child alone, almost all may be expanded to suit a circle of children in nursery or kindergarten, and thus be made a thousandfold more useful and delightful.

We cannot estimate too highly the value

* Miss Blow has just published a volume of commentaries on the "Mother-Play" and on the philosophy of Froebel, entitled "Letters to a Mother."

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of companionship to children, the worth of a social intercourse between equals, and this is brought out marvellously in these games of Froebel. Here each child becomes so interested that he would gladly play every part in each small drama himself, yet he can do nothing alone, and very soon he sees that the coöperation of others is necessary if there is to be any real happiness.

Lessons in Citizenship are Taught

No moral lecture is needed to teach a child that "joy flies monopolists"; he sees it illustrated under his own eyes, and, led by the teaching, learns to surrender his selfish desires to the common good. He learns here also, for his playmates teach it, that first lesson of a good citizen, that the amount of liberty he can enjoy is dependent upon his non-interference with the rights of others, and thus, in baby fashion, he prepares himself for later civic life. There is no time when the child so fully and unconsciously reveals himself, his strength and his weakness, as in the kin-

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dergarten games, and therefore there is no time better suited to studying his personality and deciding upon what it needs for harmonious development.

Value of Musical Training

When we begin to think of introducing Froebel's songs and games to the life of the home, we must consider as another advantage the musical training which they give. It is sometimes objected that for children who have no musical taste time is wasted on such training, but the objection rests on a false foundation, for it may boldly be said that there are no such children. They all care for music; they are all quite willing to sing at first, or until, if they are tone-deaf, harsh criticism or ridicule have made them conscious of their deficiency. It may be questioned, indeed, whether any such deficiency would persist in after life if they began to sing early enough, and every kindergartner who has watched the musical development of a child who for months growled monotonously and

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cheerfully along on a single note, will agree with the writer in her skepticism.

There seems to be nothing which so unites a family as singing together, and these kindergarten songs are, for the most part, so simple, so melodious, and at the same time so full of interest that the older boys and girls of the flock commonly delight to learn them also and to help the babies to illustrate them. Any person of good taste who has tried to find appropriate songs for little children knows how difficult it is to discover anything which is not, on the one hand, silly or vapid or absolutely nonsensical; or, on the other, sentimental, high-flown, or inappropriate in subject and treatment. Kindergarten songs, whatever they may lack in other directions, are always appropriate to childish interests, and it may also generally be said in their praise that there is a something in them which appeals to the spiritual and mental faculties of the singer, as well as to his æsthetic taste.

Should they lack this higher element, this over-tone, they would fail entirely in

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their supreme object, for they were meant, as W. L. Tomlins has said, "to search out the flower-germs of the soul, awakening them to response and stimulating them to a largeness of growth that leaves no place for weeds."

Classes of Kindergarten Games

A great variety of kindergarten music-books is now to be had, and not one of them, be it the least upon the list, but contains some songs which the children will enjoy and by which they may profit. Broadly speaking, they all deal in different ways and in varying degrees of merit with these three great classes of plays: those treating of the family and the home; of Nature and the life of Nature, and of the trades and industries. One might classify and sub-classify under these heads to an extent of several pages, perhaps, and might add a few minor headings, but these are at least the largest and most important, and should all be used in our home and neighbourhood work. If several versions of the same game are found in the books at your

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command, that one having the best music and most poetic words is, of course, to be selected, for it should be our greatest effort in the kindergarten to come as near perfection as possible in our setting of the subjects we present to the children.

How the Games are to be Played

As to the way in which the games are to be conducted, some idea may be obtained from the "Mother-Play," from the music-books, from treatises on the kindergarten, and from the children themselves, who can often give ideas on dramatisation if they are encouraged to express them. It would, of course, be an invaluable assistance to the novice who is attempting to conduct Froebel's games among the children of her neighbourhood if she could spend a few mornings in a good child-garden and catch some of the spirit, the happiness, the innocent gayety and enthusiasm which belong to true kindergarten play. Failing this, some interested kindergartner might perhaps be induced to spend an afternoon with the Mothers' Club, and, taking up some of

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the standard games, teach the members how to play them. If neither of these things can be managed, all is not lost if we remember that these are movement plays, to be used by a circle of children (always a circle), and are to be accompanied by gestures and imitative activities. They are to be played, not merely sung, and all the children are to be encouraged to take part in them. The majority of the traditional games of children are played in a ring and accompanied by singing and movements, and as all of us have engaged in them in our time, the method in which they were managed will be remembered as a hint in conducting these far more beautiful and spiritual plays of Froebel.*

Learning to Play with Children

It may be said, parenthetically, that this learning to play with and like children is, like everything connected with the kindergarten, as much a blessing to women as to those they serve. We have far too little

* Several chapters on play will be found in "The Republic of Childhood," Vol. III.

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play in this country—hearty, physical play that sets the blood tingling and gives the delight of rhythmic motion, and one welcomes it as a sign of a return to the Golden Age when one sees the joyousness of kindergartners at their festivals, and the wholesome way in which they surrender themselves to the play-spirit.

And here is a field for women who are neither mothers nor teachers, but who have become touched with the magic of the kindergarten games. Let them go out into the highways and hedges, or into the streets and alleys for the older children, the neglected, untutored boys and girls, sharp and painfully precocious from crowded city life, or dull-witted and heavy from rustic seclusion and lack of training. When they are gathered together, teach them to play—it is no easy task—after the kindergarten ideal, but games somewhat more advanced and requiring greater skill and ability, and see how you waken the imagination and the powers of loving and hoping and dreaming, and how you touch to finer issues every faculty which before lay close-folded under

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the hard crust of every-day life. It will not be a new experiment; you need not stand back doubting whether it can succeed, and fearing to enlist in an uncertain cause, for in both England and America and wherever the Social Settlement has planted its banners, you will find that play is looked upon as one of the most hopeful educational agencies for the neglected child.

Value of the Kindergarten Games

It cannot be said too often that the kindergarten games hold what is highest and best in Froebel's philosophy, and for those who are interested in the training of children no time can be better spent than in studying them.

Not only are they of the greatest service in cultivating the spiritual nature and in fostering the civic virtues, but they give most valuable physical development and a training to the mind which nothing else can supply.

In estimating their worth to the child, add the influence of poetry to the influence

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of music and of gesture, set down in the column the sympathetic comprehension which they give of Nature and human relationships, of the value of labour, of time and order, of dependence and interdependence, of care and protection, of love and duty, and multiply the sum by the companionship of other children. The product will be an astonishing one, such an array of figures that we cannot attempt to take them in, but can only gaze upon them in wonder as they stretch across the page.

The Right Hand Must Guide the Work

But it must not be forgotten that to obtain this product you must have the right multiplier and the right multiplicand, and though you possess the former, the latter will not be yours until the right numbers have been added together to make it.

And even then, when all the essentials have been gathered, the arithmetical process will not perform itself. The right hand must hold the pencil in the kindergarten, as in all other work, and behind

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the hand must be the brain to think, the heart to love, and the soul to aspire.

Froebel was thinking of the ideal leader of children, whether mother or teacher, when he said:

“ With each caress, each care, each merry play
Her own soul deepens for God’s love;
And as the sun with fervent ray
Draws each small flower to look above,
She draws her child’s soul forth to meet her
own,
And learns that love, in earth and Heaven, is
one.”

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CHAPTER VII

COME, LET US LIVE WITH OUR CHILDREN

It has lately been said by one of our most thoughtful and far-seeing American writers that the kindergarten movement promised to become the most important feature of contemporary educational history. Those of us who are in the midst of the current have long felt that this must be true, but it is so difficult to make an impartial estimate of the force that sweeps one's own life along, that it is well to have the final judgment pronounced by those whose ships are afloat on other waters.

It is not alone that here and there over the country, wherever superintendents and school boards have recognised the value of the Froebel idea, that steps have been taken to make it the initial stage of education; it is not alone that training schools for kindergartners multiply with each year, and with each year the number of their

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students increases; it is not alone that the National Educational Association now gives the kindergarten an honoured place upon its programmes, and the International Kindergarten Union annually holds crowded conferences in various cities of the United States; it is not alone these things, but the fact that behind them all is the tremendous spiritual force of Froebel's philosophy as it has become a motive power in the hearts of women.

Power of Froebel's Philosophy

It is impossible to think of the kindergarten as you would of any other system of education, for it is infinitely more than this; it is a philosophy of life, a gospel of good works, and an interpreter of religions.

It does not address women alone, but it has for them a special message—a message that they yearn to hear even while yet its import is unknown to them, a message that once heard will be repeated to another, and to another still, until the earth is filled with the sound thereof.

There is something about the kindergar-

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ten that is like the sweep of a great, new faith; its votaries are enthusiasts, and they will not be withheld from preaching and teaching. To give an illustration, not long ago two women in the middle West fitted up their own travelling carriage, and drove day after day through great sections of country for no other purpose than that they might hold open-air meetings on the subject of the kindergarten.

A solitary instance, you say, and one perhaps never to be repeated. Very likely; but what does it show as to the strength of the idea? Did you ever hear of a teacher so impressed with the value of the Grube system, for example, that he went out into the wilderness to preach its doctrines, or so thrilled with the power of the Sheldonian method of object-teaching that, like the Ancient Mariner, he detained each wedding guest he met that he might talk of it? No, depend upon it, the power of the kindergarten is unique. Attack it, lay siege to it as you will, pull it down in one place, riddle it with shot in another, lay low its towers, destroy its battlements, and

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when your warfare is over, the castle is still there to be rebuilt and lived in, for you have not stirred a single rock of its foundations.

Women's Work for Children

Within the last decade those who are interested in work for children have noted that a great impetus has been given to the various movements which may be classed under this head, and have rightly ascribed to the kindergarten and to the kindergartner the growing interest taken by women all over the country in their special duties and responsibilities. There is scarcely a large town in America to-day where there is not a branch of the Mothers' Congress, a Woman's Club devoted to children and their interests, a Child-Study Circle, or a Parents' Association.

And for those persons (generally men) skeptical of the advantages of clubs, and prone to believe that ideas evaporate there in the heat of conversation, it may be said that in these same centres of civilisation there are numerous courses of lectures

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every season, given by wise and eminent persons on matters pertaining to the mental, physical, and spiritual nature of the child, which women may attend without other responsibility than that of lending a decorous and dignified ear.

Some of the Froebel training schools of our country are now opening special departments for the education of women in the line of their first duties. The Chautauqua Summer School has this year inaugurated a series of parents' meetings under the department of pedagogy, and in various places an especially useful work is well begun—that of the proper training of nurse-maids according to Froebel's principles.

The directors of the free kindergartens, too, are answerable for the really fine and encouraging work which is going on everywhere under their auspices, for the ignorant mothers in their especial corner of the community, women who, whether Americans or foreigners, are often as well-intentioned as the best of us; who only appear dull and hard because of the dulness and hardness of their lives, and who are most responsive

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to good influences when once their hearts have been unlocked by those magic words, "the children." If the kindergarten had never been and would never be anything else but an uplifting power, a sweet, saving grace, a grammar of life to these women, we might still with reason expend upon it all our enthusiasm.

Kindergarten and School United

Still further must its influence reach, however, for it must bring continuity to the child's life, it must carry its principles over into the school, and make of mother, kindergartner, and teacher a harmonious trio working together for the good of their common charge—a weighty and an important trio, too, one wielding great power, and to be counted with when dangers threaten the integrity of our educational institutions.

The kindergarten has not always done its duty in this direction, it must be confessed, and has sometimes fancied it was sufficient unto itself, and had nothing to

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lend to or borrow from the school, but this error of judgment is being corrected now that it has grown older and wiser, and it has begun to exercise its precious right of coöperating with the other educational forces of the community.

Child-Study

One of these educational forces, especially strong in America at present, is that of child-study. In other countries great interest is also felt in this subject, but in the United States remarkable progress has been made and valuable results obtained, largely through the enthusiasm of Dr. G. Stanley Hall and his remarkable power of communicating that enthusiasm not only to his colleagues, but to the teaching world. The kindergarten already owes much to the new science, but should it be more greatly indebted in the future, the account would still be no more than balanced, for it was Froebel who gave the impetus to much of the work, and he who may well be called "the father of child-study."

It is a science to which parents have

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much of value to communicate, to which they may be of the greatest service, and receive, in return, inestimable help in solving their peculiar problems.

It requires close and careful observation of children from the time they open their eyes to the world, and accurate recording of these observations, but it gives such a knowledge of the particular child as no mere careless living by its side could ever do, and often makes it possible to avert serious evils, either mental, physical, or spiritual, whose beginnings might not otherwise have been noticed.

It enables the mother, when she gives her little one into the care of the kindergarten, and later into that of the school, to furnish at the same time a brief record of his development up to that date, which is an immense saving of time and labour to the teacher, and enables her at once to classify and place him according to his abilities. She knows whether his senses are defective; whether he has any small malady, or tendency to malady, which must be considered; whether he is fond of exercise or

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must be encouraged to take it; whether he is irritable or of a nervous temperament; whether he eats and sleeps normally, and so on. These points are largely physical, of course, though they all bear upon education none the less; but imagine the valuable facts that might be added as to the child's knowledge of colours and forms and tones, as to his experiences, as to his memory, his powers of observation, his judgment, his fancy, his tractability, his peculiarities, and his special interests. You can see at once that the teacher is placed in an entirely different position in regard to him, and can go to work with a known, or measurably known, quantity, instead of with an utterly unknown one.

One of the most valuable associations that women can organise, not only for their children, but for themselves and for the future welfare of the community, is a Child-Study Circle; for, banded together with such an object in view, the knowledge and experience of the one are multiplied by the knowledge and experience of the others, and the combined force of enthusiasm

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makes a power in their own little corner of the world.

Every mother is more or less of an instinctive child-student; but for those who wish to take up the work more definitely and with fuller understanding of its bearings, there are countless helps to be had in interesting tracts and pamphlets and books upon the subject, in "questionnaires" and observation-blanks furnished by Child-Study Societies, and in a magazine devoted to the science.

Responsibility of Women for All Children

In the first chapter of this handbook it was urged that no woman who is childless or unmarried, or whose brood is fledged and flown, need therefore think that she is exempt from responsibility in these matters. We cannot so hedge ourselves into our own little corners and declare that other people's children are other people's business. "Business!" as Scrooge's Ghost said. "Mankind was my business; the common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence were all my

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business! The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business.”

As women, we have a special duty toward children—our own children, everybody’s children, anybody’s children, nobody’s children—a duty which devolves upon us by reason of the fact that we are women, and one which is particularly urgent upon those who have had the benefits of safe and shielded lives, careful home training, education, and cultivation.

It is incumbent upon those who have freely received to give as freely, and we must feel the responsibility so keenly that the thought will blossom into action.

Signs are everywhere visible that women are becoming conscious of this one inalienable right of theirs, this clear, unmistakable duty—at once a burden and a blessing, a task and a privilege, a cross and a crown.

As the child of the legend clung to the saint of old, imploring his aid to cross the river, so he clings to-day to the garments of every woman amongst us. We cannot,

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we dare not turn away from those imploring eyes, nor unclasp those baby fingers; we must lift up the little one and carry him through the troubled depths, though his weight in midstream seem almost beyond our strength.

And if we keep bravely on, who knows, when at last we have forded the waters, but that we too shall find that, like St. Christopher, we have borne the Christ upon our shoulders.

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